

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-5 and 7-11 are amended, and claims 15-18 are added. Claims 1 and 7 are amended to even further distinguish over the applied references. Claims 2 and 8 are amended to be consistent with amended claims 1 and 7. Claims 3-5 and 9-11 are amended as suggested by the Examiner. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, at page 9, line 16 through page 10, line 2; at page 10, line 24 through page 11, line 4; at page 12, lines 1-3; at page 23, lines 14-17; and in Fig. 1. No new matter is added.

The Office Action objects to claims 3-5 and 9-11 for informalities. The amendments to the claims obviate the objection. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating possible corrections.

The Office Action (1) rejects claims 1, 2, 6 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,899,212) (Kaneko); (2) rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kaneko in view of Kawada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,883,360) (Kawada); (3) rejects claims 4, 7-8, 10, 12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kaneko in view of Suzuki (U.S. Patent No. 5,691,772); (4) rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kaneko in view of Kawada, and further in view of Suzuki; and (5) rejects claims 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kaneko in view of Suzuki, and further in view of Kawada. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that Kaneko discloses the combination of features recited in independent claim 1. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Kaneko fails to disclose or suggest a white balance adjuster that adjusts a signal ratio among the first image-capturing signal, the second image-capturing signal having been adjusted by the first gain adjuster and the third image-capturing signal having been adjusted by the second gain adjuster to achieve a predetermined ratio, as recited by independent claim 1. Thus, independent claim 1 recites

that the white balance adjuster performs its adjustments to the signals output by the first and second gain adjusters after received signals have been adjusted by the first and second gain adjusters. Claim 1 recites two stages of adjustment for white balancing; a course stage first, and a fine or detailed stage second. However, Kaneko merely discloses a single stage of white balance adjustment, the adjustment performed only by the gains of the variable gain amplifiers (22R, 22G, 22B). Thus, Kaneko fails to disclose the fine or detailed, final adjustment performed by the claim 1 white balance adjuster. See Kaneko, col. 6, line 57 through col. 7 line 8. Kaneko fails to disclose or suggest a white balance adjuster that adjusts a signal ratio among the first image-capturing signal, the second image-capturing signal having been adjusted by the first gain adjuster and the third image-capturing signal having been adjusted by the second gain adjuster to achieve a predetermined ratio, as recited by independent claim 1.

Further, Kaneko and Suzuki fail to disclose or suggest the combination of features of independent claim 7. Kaneko fails to disclose or suggest a white balance controller that individually controls the first gain adjuster, the second gain adjuster and the third gain adjuster so as to achieve a predetermined ratio among the individual image-capturing signal levels detected by the signal level detector, as recited by independent claim 7. As discussed above. Kaneko makes a single adjustment to the image signals by varying the gain of amplifiers 22R, 22G and 22B. The adjustments are based on color temperature data that is analyzed to determine gain adjustments, similar to one stage of adjustments in independent claim 7. However, Kaneko fails to further control the gains so as to achieve a predetermined ratio among the individual image-capturing signal levels detected by the signal level detector, as recited by independent claim 7.

Kawada and Suzuki fail to overcome the deficiencies of Kaneko, and therefore claims 1 and 7 are patentable over all the applied references. Claims 2-6 and 9-18 depend from

independent claims 1 and 7, and therefore are patentable over the applied references at least for the same reasons, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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MAC:MEM/hs

Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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